Depot Town Rag

Volume 17, Number 12 *"All the news in one block in one month."*

100% FREE
Rag Content
December 1994

- **Kindness flows**
- *Courier* grows
- Death Trip 1880-81
- ***Guide* remembers**
- Sidewalks clear

and other strictly local stuff. . . .

A Publication of the DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI 48198

VICTORIAN HOLIDAY

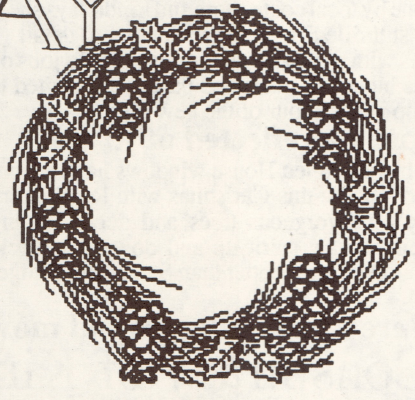
'Tis the season

• DTA activist and jazz entrepreneur, Carolyn Mc Keever, has returned to another of her projects as general chair of the Festival of Lights in Riverside Park which opened on Thanksgiving weekend and continues though New Year's Eve. District volunteers will welcome visitors through the gates nightly.

• Remingon/Walker's Sandy Hoag has again volunteered to coordinate the many neighborhood activities which kick off the Christmas Holiday season on this block. It's become a unique tradition, down here, to celebrate the Victorian Holiday in the month of December, not in the newer hip-mall-tradition which closely follows the Fourth of July paarade and always coincides with Hallowe'en.

• Farmers' Market Holiday Crafts shows set the season every Saturday in the Freighthouse.

• The third annual New Year Jubilee will again rotate around the Depot Town venue when families turn out to celebrate the end of 1994 and welcome the New Year in Riverside Park, the Freighthouse and around the whole town. George Bedard will perform.



In historic Ypsilanti's Depot Town:

Saturday and Sunday
December 3 & 4

- **Open Houses in many business**
- **Crafts Show at the Farmers' Market**
- **Santa Claus in the block**
- **Victorian Costumes encouraged for all**

EMU Depot Town Center

32 E. Cross St.
487-6815

Special Holiday Lecture/Discussion Series

Judaism & Christianity: Major Religions in Transition

•

7 P.M. Thursday, December 1, $8
Topc: Changing Judaism
Presenter: Sherwin T. Wine

•

7 P.M. Thursday, December 8, $8
Topic: Changing Catholicism
Presenter: Sherwin T. Wine

•

7 P.M. Thursday, December 15, $8
Topic: Changing Protestantism
Presenter: Sherwin T. Wine

Political play-offs imminent

Six councilmembers represent district this month

Politics are changing in Ypsilanti. Last month's acceptance of the new City Charter leaves what has for so long been called 'the east side' with more representation than seen since the 1852 election when it seceded from the City for a year. Until the new charter takes effect in the new year, Depot Town sits in a ward with six locally elected politicoes who are now trying to figure who will run for the four-year and two-year terms in the newly adopted three-ward system.

Although Republicans may be taking over the rest of the free world, Democrats still hold strong in the workers' side of town. Observers have noted, however, that recent elections have seen fewer responses from voters who are dead, although Highland Cemetery continues to be included in the district.

Absentee voters still figure strongly, even with V. Lois Wells' ouster from Council. 5th Ward Councilmember, Terry McDonald said, "We've learned our lesson" about absentee voters. AV ballots were recognized for their aid in passing the new Charter proposal.

Casino gambling for Depot Town?

The recent popularity of 'sin taxes' causes many to wonder how long it will be before there's a gambling casino on the block. Although proponents prefer to call it 'gaming,' blackjack, craps and roulette have only been seen in this district when the Chamber of Commerce digs into its cultural/religious roots and creates a sanitized parody of gambling for a hometown America-style fundraising event. A little testier than canasta or bingo, the practice has been a popular mainstay of community events since even before the annual August Yester Fest events. Hold-outs for EMU's 'Huron' mascot may want to form an 'Indian' reservation right here!

With today's high interest and emphasis on gambling, and with tobacco and alcohol as popular supports for public education, many of the country's educators may well be encouraging their students to smoke, drink and gamble just because it's so good for business. Prositution, they anticipate, could be the next big money-maker the politicians will wish to tap to funnel funds into the state's classrooms.

In Ypsilanti there may arise yet another schism between City and Township since the local ladies of the day *and* evening seem to have moved out of the City and into the 'burbs. Sheriff's officials have complained to the City of Ypsilanti lately that the hookers who used to solicit on South Grove Street are now clustering east of town, near Michigan Avenue at Ridge Road.

Meanwhile, most of the people who wave from the sidewalks down in Depot Town are not tying to either sell *or rent* their services. That kind of friendship isn't for sale.

'Nother idea for the Thompson Block and depot:

Follow the tough trend of today and turn these places into local prisons. Taxpayers still have not lost interest in paying for punishment rather than prevention and, if the current growth rate continues, we'll have to build a new 500-bed prison every year in Michigan. Why not have our own right here in the neighborhood? Historically correct bars over the windows could bring America's newest home improvement trend right into this ancient district, as well.

New color scheme completed

The new awning at James McDonald's Antiques and Apple Annie's Vintage Clothing (29 East Cross) unifies what many thought to be a 'radical' color scheme for this old block.

Green's and purples blend and complement each other in unusual and effective ways on the front and back facades of this distinctive shop and bring the pallet of 'earth tones' on much of the rest of the block something to think about. After all, the wines and greys across the street set a theme for this disctrict that said, "We don't have to do everything in 'oatmeal'."

Good job, painters! It's an elegant combination of hues on this Italianate bay.

A new sign will complete the stunning ensemble of greens-to-lavendar and the old sign -which was pretty stunning, itself - will now grace their rear wall facing the Freighthouse and Farmers' Market.

Tower signals the holidays

Special thanks to Robert Fox for his ministrations at the crux of River, Cross and the railroad tracks. Electric lights and candles adorning the Signal Tower make a most delightful entry to the distict. Why not leave it up all year?

5 P.M., Sunday, 4 December

Ypsilanti Food Co-op Holiday Party

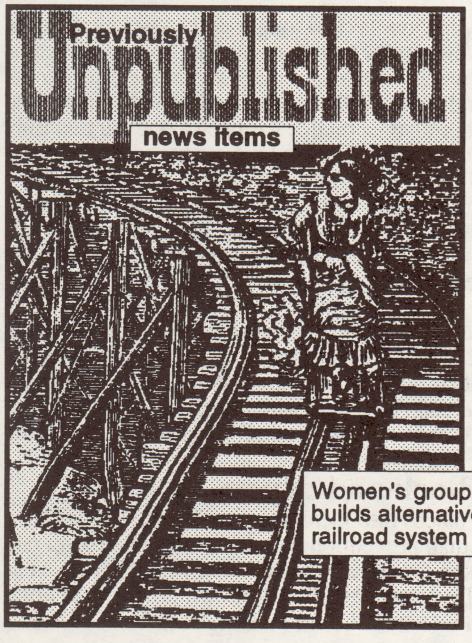
Vegetarian PotLuck / Feast
$2 donation or bring a dish to pass

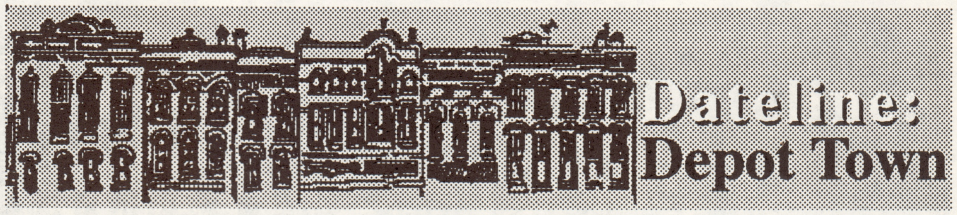
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Ypsilanti Farmers' Market Freightouse
in Historic Depot Town

Live Music

For more information please call 483-1520.





Depot Doo doubles the space

Linda Lister's Depot Doo hair salon is twice the size of its orignal location at 25 East Cross since its expansion through the arch in the space at #23. The former gallery space doubles salon services which include the most up-to-date tanning beds to be found anywhere.

And, yes, the collection of Marilyn Monroe memorabilia has grown right along with the expansion. Some say that's the main reason for the growth - Linda needed more room to hang her outstanding collection of Monrovia. It's an amazing and entertaining collection.

Most of the interior remodeling work was done by local contractors and Linda says she is "just thrilled" with their attention to detail.

As with any of the enthusiastic re-do jobs on this block, all interested parties are invited to drop in for a tour of the new digs.

Sparkle reflected at R/W

The old Follett House windows have a wonderful glow this Christmas with Remington-Walker's gorgeous trees and decor shining their holiday spirit up and down the block. Nobody does it better than Sandy and Midge!

Sisters expand, too

The dynamic display at Heritage Fest in August caused many to catch their breath as they passed Me 'n' My Sisters' Country Store at 13 E. Cross. That tiny new shop overflowed into the former parking area like a flood of country crafts had surged down the river.

Those who asked, "Where do they put all that stuff?" will find the answer on the next trip to the Sisters'. They've added a huge sales/exhibit room at the rear which gives this unique labarynth even more charm and interest than before. Wrapping around the Depot Town Counseling Center, this fascinating gift shop offers deorating surprises at every turn.

The shop's 'bird room' is particularly charming, with wooden birds and decorated bird houses that will bring the winter bird feeder friends right into the house.

The Heritage Square Building has come along way since it was Anderson and Deck's garage! Tour them all: from the Counseling Center, to Me 'n' My Sisters, to the Teachers Shop. It's a delightful melange of modern methods of merchandising.

Here's one underground movement you'll want to join

Conspiracy of Kindness

- condensed from *Glamour*, Adair Lara

A woman in a read car pulls up to a tollbooth at the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. "I'm paying for myself nd the six cars behind me," she says with a smile.

One after another, the next six drivers arrive at the tollbooth, money in hand. "Some lady up ahead already paid your fare," says the collector. "Have a nice day.

The woman, it turned out, had read a note taped to a friend's refrigerator: *Practice random kindness and senseless acts of beauty.* The words leaped out at her, and she wrote them down.

Judy Forman spotted the same phrase on a warehouse wall 75 miles from her home in San Francisco. When she couldn't get it out of her mind, she finally drove all the way back to copy it exactly. "I thought it was incredibly beautiful," she said, explaining why she writes it at the bottom of all her letters. "It's like a message from above."

Her husband, Frank, a teacher, enjoyed the saying so much he posted it on the wall for his seventh-graders, one of whom was my daughter. A local columnist, I put it in the paper, admitting I like it but didn't know its source or real meaning.

Two days later, I heard from Anne Herbert, 40, a writer in Marin County, California. She had jotted the phrase down on a restaurant place mat after mulling it over for days. "Here's the idea," she says. "If you think there should be more of something, do it - randomly. Kindness can build on itself as much as violence can."

Now the message is spreading, on bumper stickers, walls and business cards. And as it spreads, so does a vision of guerrilla goodness.

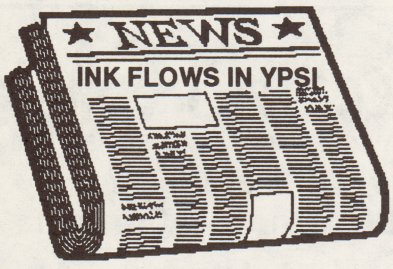
A passer-by may plunk a coin into a stranger's meter just in time. A group of people with pails and mops may descend on a run-down house and clean it from top to bottom while the elderly owners look on, amazed. A teen-ager shoveling snow may be hit by the impulse and shovel his neighbor's driveway too.

Senseless acts of beauty spread. A man plants daffodils along a roadway. A concerned citizen roams the streets collecting litter in a supermarket cart. A student scrubs graffiti from a park bench. It 's a positive anarchy, a gentle disorder, a sweet disturbance.

They say you can't smile without cheering yourself up. Likewise, you can't commit a random act of kindness or beauty without feeling as if your own troubles have been lightened - because the world has become a slightly better place.

And you can't be a recipient without feeling a pleasant jolt. If you were one of those commuters whose bridge fare was paid, who knows what you might have been inspired to do for someone else?

Like all revolutions, guerrilla goodness begins slowly, with a single act. Let it be yours.



Newswatch:

The premier edition of the *Ypsilanti Courier* made its debut last month, claiming to be "Your ONLY Hometown Newspaper." Even though it's printed in Jackson, the new sheet looks comfortingly similar to the earlier *Ypsilanti Press* in its page layouts. Many of the old regulars serve on the new sheet's staff and locals who like to see court reports and restaurant inspections will revel in its local flavor.

Some folks may claim to only read *The New York Times* and only vote in national elections, but the tradition of most hometowners is to make their focus primarily local. Everything else comes after that.

Regular readers of *The Rag* and the *Press/News* watch this development with interest. The same week the *Courier* came out, a *Press/News* map placed the historic Towner House on Washington Street. Critics still claim *The Rag* is too insular and self-serving to too small a public. "How can you make any progress when you're always looking behind you?" they reason.

The *Courier* will be delivered free until January, then it sells for $18 a year. Jim Kise, editor and general manager, encouraged early subscriptions though their office at 24 N. Washington Street - a full two blocks away from the Towner House.

Come see what Nature sent us this month . . .

Ypsi Food Co-op

Sun 12-5; M,T,Th,F 10-8; Wed. 10-9; Sat. 9-8

312 N. RIVER ST. 483-1520

- Custom Draperies
- Vertical Blinds
- 1" Blinds
- Shutters
- Shades
- Wallpaper
- Installation
- Repairs

Esquire Custom Drapery & Blinds

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Ypsi 482-6338
10 E. Cross St. Ypsilanti, MI 48198

Two floors of fine antiques
Judy & Roger Julie, proprietors

Renewed Interest Antiques

33 East Cross • 482-4525
In Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town

James Thomas Mann's Depot Town Death Trip

from early accounts in *The Ypsilanti Commercial* Part VI

4 September 1880

- A Terrible Calamity To a Poor Laboring Man and Family in Distress

About three months ago Joseph Patillo left his native land in Bohemia, and came to this County of golden harvests, peace and plenty. He had two brothers here already. One having worked for sometime in the paper mills. Joseph was employed at the Ypsilanti Paper mills. Tuesday moring he left his home, wife and four young children blithe and happy, little dreaming of the great sorrow that was so soon to be entalied for life upon himself and his. He lives this side of Capt. Wallace, on Congress St. east. Walking on the railroad track, dangerous at any time, especially where so many trains were running as there are at this side of the railroad bridge, suddenly a train came whirling from the west, he sprang onto another track when another train running in the same direction east, struck him mashing bot hhis feet. Dr. Batwell was summoned and in about thirty minutes was engaged in the work of amputation. He took off both his feet at the ankle joints. The Dr. says he is doing well and will live. His family is destitute and demand municipal and private charity.

11 September 1880

The employess of Lowell Paper Mill have donated one days pay (about sixty dollars) to Joseph Paucck, the man who had his feet cut off by the cars last week, a noble generosity.

15 January 1881

A sad calamity happened to our fellow citizen, Mr. Joseph Johnson, last Monday morning. At the usual time, 7 a.m., he went to his work. Roadmaster on the M.C.R.R. He was on the racks, and going forward to give directions to the engineer, when he stepped on a small piece of ice and the engine suddenly starting up (the racks had been hauling ice) and he fell between the cars, moving slowly. He made desperate haste to extricate himself, crawling out between the wheels; but his left leg was caught and mashed clear above the knee. He was immmediately taken to his home on Mill street, and Dr. Farrand and assistant, of Detroit, summoned by telegram; also DR. Batwell and Owen. Not deeming it safe to await the arrival of teh Detroiters, our home surgeons, just as efficient save in name as the foreigners, amputated the limb above the knee. Mr. Johnson has been roadmaster 32 years, a man of great experience, and never received a scratch before. That pebble of ice and sudden start of the engine, were conjoined, unforeseen curcumstances, that brought the veteran railroader into trouble at last. Every railroad man is trebly conscious of the text, "Ye know not the day nor the hour."

22 January 1881

- Another Sad Event

Thursday morning Mr. William Allerdyce lost his life. He was brakesman on the local train going east. In the cut near the first bridge he stepped off on to the track. The engine was whistling, and the atmosphere beign hazy he did not hear or see a train that was backing up, and thus was run over by the ponderous wheels of the entire train, severing his right leg from the knee to the upper third, and the left to hip joint. He was brought immediately to the office of the freight house, Drs. Batwell and Owen being summoned. The poor fellow died at 7 p.m. It was fearful to hear his cries, "Oh, my God, help." William was unmarried, and 25 years old, the sole support of his parents, who reside at Wayne. His brother John, fireman on the express, who resides at Jackson and has a family dependent upon him, was at his side as soon as possible. His father (Alexander Allerrdyce) and mother came on the freight, and sorrowing, took the dead boy home with them. A lynx-eye is needed every moment in railroading. Boys never let up, and then dangers thick enough beset your life, and "Be ye ready, for in a moment when ye thiink not the Son of man cometh."

Saturday Morning, 19 November 1881

- A Painful Accident

Sunday moring Geo. VanTassel was riding into Detorit on a freight train and east of the Depot fell off and both of his legs were severed by the rail, one above the ankle joint and the other below the knee. Some two weeks, since, George while coupling cars in Ann Arbor had an arm badly injured. He was a brakesman. The Superitendent wrote to him to come into Detroit and he would give him light employment until he recovered. He was on his way thither. The train broke in two nearly opposite the freight house and of course the engineer being signaled, stopped. George climbeb up on the rear car of the east part of the train, intending to stand there until the engineer could back up for the lost cars. But the engine was reversed so quickly that he was thrown off on to the track and beneath the wheels of the pondrous rear car. His arm being in a sling, he was unfited to stand on top of a car, much less to meet such a sudden chock. He suffered terribly and besdies feeling that his life, was hence forth to be a limbless one, a burden to himself and friends, saying nothing of the woes of amputation; and subsequent suffering he plead with his friends to kill him. Drs. Batwell and Owen were summoned and both legs amputated below the knee. We met George last Saturday having quite a conversation with him. He is the Son-in-law of Orin Carpenter and when at home resides with his wife at her fathers. He was a a fine looking man, evidently possessed of a good deal of vitality and will doubteless recover. It is a sad blow to him, his wife and relatives. How often in regard to affliction, "It don't rain, it pours."

$19.95 is begining to look like a bargain year:

James Thomas Mann continues his fascination with local killings and murders with a new series next year! Watch for it here.

Depot Town Association, Inc.

17 November 1994

DTA: Firmly rooted in the past - with a clear view forward!

Minutes of October approved as published.

Depot Town Downtown Development Authority: New chair of DDA, Richard Reid, reported that there will be a meeting at the Freighthouse on Tuesday, 29 November at 7:30 P.M. Business and property owners were encouraged to attend to give input concerning upcoming projects.

Events: Carolyn McKeever says everything is in place for the opening of the Festival of Lights on Sunday, 20 November at 6 P.M. with new saluting displays. There will be horse-drawn vehicles to provide rides through the park every Saturday night for two hours. A truck or van with a trailer hitch is needed to move the cart to and from the park on Saturdays. Any volunteers? Thanks to those groups and individuals who will act as greeters to the park each night.

Caboose: A contract between the DTA and the Ypsilanti Police Department is expected to be signed 18 November. Large banner for the Jazz Festival which was stored in the caboose is missing. Is anyone aware of its location?

Old Business:

Checking Account: Transfer of the DTA checking account to First of America is on hold until a post office box is acquired. Treasurer Gwen Blackmer reports she is on a waiting list for P.O. Box.

Victorian Holidays: Deck the halls, doorways, windows, etc. Business owners, property owners, and tenants are getting into the spirit of the holidays. A budget of not more than $200 was approved to buy greens from Hon's Flowers at cost to wrap the light poles in Depot Town. Remington-Walker is making the bows at cost. Santa will be in the area to hear all of the children's (and big kids') wishes. Have your picture taken with Santa then guess the number of candy canes in the jar to win Depot Dollars to be spent with Depot Town's contributing merchants.

New Year's Eve Jubilee: Headliner George Beddard will be performing.

Bylaws: Meeting scheduled for committee members on Tuesday 6 December at 8 P.M. at Miller's.

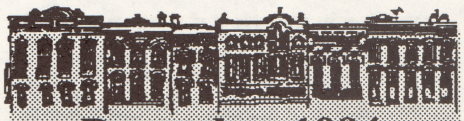
New Business:

Flyers: Karen Brenner brought a prototype of a tri-fold brochure of Depot Town. Further discussion tabled for the time.

Best Yet: Bob Fox for decorating the Signal Tower for the holidays. Thanks so much. That's true holiday spirit!

Golden Goose: The misplacement of Depot Town's jazz banner.

Next meeting: 7:30 P.M., Thursday, 15 December at Renewed Interest Antiques. Meetings are open to all parties interested in the success of the district.



December 1994

Depot Towners are invited to participate in any or all of the following activities for the good of this old commercial district:

- **Depot Town Association**
  7:30 p.m., Thursday, 15th
  Renewed Interest Antiques
- **Festival of Lights**
  November 20 - December 31
- **Antique Engine Club**
  Annual Christmas Dinner TBA
  at the Freighthouse Coffeeshop
- **Victorian Holiday**
  December 3 & 4
- **New Year Jubilee**
  December 31

THE DEPOT TOWN RAG

A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc. a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate. -Tom Dodd, editor

The Depot Town Association, Inc.
Tom Steele, president
c/o The Old Caboose
400 Market Place
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

Watch for Santa Claus in old Depot Town on Saturday and Sunday, December 3 & 4!

"Wishing You A Merry Christmas"

HANSEN'S STANDARD PRINTING

35 E. Cross Street • Ypsilanti, Michigan
In Historic Depot Town

"Lets keep Christ in Christmas"

Guarantee
Your support makes a difference!

Please include me among the members of
The Depot Town Association, Inc.

Name _____
Street _____
City_____State_____ZIP _____

I'm available to help with Association projects. Call me at _____

Annual dues:
- ❑ $25 Regular Voting Member (Property or business owner)
- ❑ $10 Associate Member (Interested in and supportive)
- ❑ $100 Life Member (A great deal if you had joined in 1976!)
- ❑ Please place my name on the monthly mailing list of *The Depot Town Rag*
- ❑ Don't mail *The Rag*. I'll pick it up in the neighborhood.
- ✂ Clip and send check to "Depot Town Association" c/o The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

Support the merchants

DEPOT TOWN
UP YOUR YPSI

who support *The Rag*

Turning on the holidays

Join your neighbors as hosts and greeters at the Festival of Lights in Riverside Park this month and next. Four to six people are needed for two three-hour shifts each night from November 20 through December 31.

DTA members will staff the gate on Christmas Eve and business sponsors on other nights include Sidetrack Grill, Miller's Ice Cream Parlor, Depot Town Travel, and the Daily Grind.

Call Councilmember Terry McDonald (483-2164) to volunteer for a shift of old fashioned Ypsilanti hospitality.

We're in the book!

Hunts remember district in their *Guide*

Travelers love to read about traveling almost as much as they like to actually travel, and most also enjoy turning around their perspective to see what their own neighborhood looks like to the rest of the world. That's why we so enjoy seeing how others write about this little old district and comparing it to our own perceptions. Don and Mary *Hunt's Guide to Southeast Michigan* is no exception and neither are the Hunts strangers to this district. It was for one of the first Heritage Fests they dedicated a whole issue of the *Ann Arbor Observer* to the Festival, Ypsilanti's Historic District, and Depot Town.

Since they sold the *Observer*, the Hunts have repaired to Waterloo, Michigan, where they publish a wide variety of *Midwestern Guides*. Their 339-page *Southeast Michigan* paperback edition is available at most bookstores and includes fun facts about Ypsi, too. **EMU, Peninsular Paper**, and **"The Real McCoy"** are featured in the opening comments, as is a view of the famous **water tower**. The **Hutchinson House, Willow Run, "The curse of one-way thoroughfares,"** and the **historic buildings on Huron Street** are described in an enthusiastic and helpful manner.

Depot Town's railroad history and recent rebirth are recounted, along with a photo of **Miller Motors** from 1946, and paragraphs on **Materials Unlimited, Schmidt's Antiques**, the **Yankee Air Force Museum**, and a restaurant/lodging section which includes **Haab's, Old China, Sidetrack**, and the **Radisson Resort**.

It's the graphic in the center of all this that caught our editor's attention. There, spread across the top of the page is the banner from *The Rag*, with this caption: *"The Depot Town Rag*, an unusually meaty neighborhood newsletter, is a good introduction to area businesses and the active historic preservation scene. Pick it up monthly at Depot Town stores."

The rest of the section on Depot Town describes the **Michigan Central passenger station** ("A fire and train collision have reduced it to its present humble state"), the **freight depot, Ypsilanti's Farmers' Market, Follett House**, the **Sidetrack, Aubree's Saloon, Old Town, Ypsilanti Food Co-op**, and the **Thompson Block**.

Robert Burns would be happy to use the "gift he gie us: to see ourselves as others see us." The Hunts have certainly given us that view - and they seem to know us well.

RAIL MAIL

Our readers write:

One of the nice things about getting older is that we can remember so much history - simply because we experienced most of it. In a country only a little more than two hundred years old, many of us have lived nearly half of the stories our kids read in their school books.

Last month's column in these pages featured a writer who noted, "What you currently call Depot Town was formerly called 'Dutch Town' [in the 1930s and '40s] but I have no idea where the name originated."

Many have taken exception to that notion and say it was most often just called 'down at the depot' until the Depot Town Association was formed in 1976 and started its public relations campaign to get it back on the local maps.

"Dutch Town was the commerical section on East Michigan Avenue," says Marlou Wiltse, indicating the strip including the Bomber Restaurant and the donut shop. "It was on Michigan Avenue, from Park to Grove Street," she adds.

Brandt Waldenmeyer says, "If my grandma were still alive, she'd set you straight. To her, Dutch Town was in the low section of Michigan Avenue, just east of the Huron River."

Ypsi enjoys Downtown, Depot Town, University Village (nee Campus Town), the Ecorse Road district, and all of them have stories of how they got their names, who started them up, when they changed, and why.

(Ever notice how Ecorse Road feels like you're driving south, but it actually goes straight east from Ypsilanti after all those diagonals?)

Are there more readers with firm facts on this? What do our readers remember of the informal name of Dutch Town in this community? Send us a note.

Marlou went on to describe the wooden bridge which led from the old high school gym to Frog Island where the gym classes met. "It rotted away," she says, and there was no money to replace it on the north east end of the 'island.'

Our intrepid researcher, James Thomas Mann, tells of a movement in town to dig a community swimming pool on the Frog Island land following a drowning in the Huron River just north of that space. The plan never materialized, and most of the kids just went on on learn to swim in the river current, anyway.

Now there will probably be a spate of letters and phone calls telling us that Frog Island isn't really an island and never was. Just what can a person believe in these days?

Me 'N' My Sister's
Country Store
13 East Cross • 487-0503
Holiday Hours: Tues - Fri 10a.m. - 8 p.m.
Saturday 9 - 6, Sunday 9 - 6

Handmade Crafts 'N' More
Visit our beautiful handpainted garden room .... for area's largest selection of handcrafted birdhouses, bird feeders, garden angels, fairies, garden hats, crows and sunflowers.
Candles • Tinware • Lamps • Dried Florals
Baskets • Stained Glass • Country Furniture
Country Clay Figures • Dolls • Bears
Bunnies • Angels • Toys 'N' More

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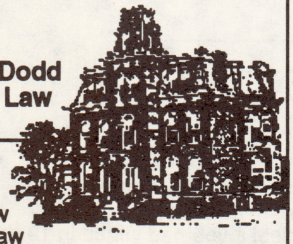
Gregory L. Dodd
Attorney at Law



• Family Law
• Criminal Law
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A Depot Town SAMPLER

A winter's walk in the railroad district

While oldsters walk measured miles in jogging outfits at suburban shopping malls, Depot Towners still traverse the sidewalks and go window shopping from the river to the railroad tracks - outdoors! A popular district activity in warm weather, it's also a big event in December when the shop owners decorate, swag and light their 19th Century facades and display windows for the holiday season.

So far behind the times that they think a 'drive-by' refers to someone who didn't have time to actually park and walk with them, Depot Towners actually continue their sidewalk sychophancy after dark. In fact, most enthuse that it's better in the evening when the store lights and street lamps are all turned on.

Visitors to the Festival of Lights are encouraged to park in the Frog Island lot and stroll across the tridge to Riverside Park then, after seeing the zillions of tree lights, and then take the other leg of the tridge to Depot Town and window shop.

Annual awards from the Depot Town Association are always careful to create a category for every window theme exhibited on East Cross and North River Streets and many merchants have made a handsome display by simply gathering the trophies of previous years into a display of its own. They're just like the rest of the general ambiance on this block: historical, sentimental, and done with impeccably good taste.

It's good, clean fun, too.

Those who are accustomed to all-indoor shopping may take the clean sidewalks in Depot Town for granted, but Michgian winters do pile up. There is little need for the City to enforce their sidewalk rules in this district, since virtually every shop owner knows a freshly shoveled or swept sidewalk is an indication that the customers' safety and satisfaction are paramount.

In any other business climate, lack of attention to such details as safe and clear sidewalks indicates the potential customer is held in contempt by the business community. That's certainly not the case down here.

Strolling this historic commercial district continues to be one of the traditional highlights of the winter holiday season.

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